

June 2002

## From the Reference Desk

Thomas Gilson

*College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Gilson, Thomas (2002) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 14: Iss. 3, Article 14.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3987>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.



of both responsibilities and information that enriches the process and the result.

**RESPONSE:** Submitted by **Rick Anderson** (Director of Resource Acquisition, University of Nevada, Reno)

In the **University of Nevada, Reno Libraries** we try to keep professional boundaries kind of fuzzy. Whoever is best suited to a particular task tends to be the one who either gets the assignment or picks it up and runs with it, and we don't worry too much about whether that task is within the person's job description. **Donnie Curtis**, whose title is Director of Research Services and who oversees all the branch libraries as well as the Collections Work Group, has been a prime mover in a couple of projects that fit **Kent's** query: setting up **SFX** for our libraries, and working with database providers to set up links within their systems. The following information is redacted from an email exchange with her:

For setting up links to publishers' databases, the process is fairly simple: they just need to know which of their journals we subscribe to, and in most cases we get all of them. Sometimes we can enable the links ourselves in an administrative module. **Donnie** has generally been the one to take care of this process.

Setting up **SFX** has been a bit more challenging. In setting up our **SFX** system, we were asked to provide journal titles and ISSNs for our packages. To make **SFX** work, you need an ISSN for every journal, and we had to strip them out of URLs or research them in other sources. We had students from all over the libraries help with some of that work. To set up our own **SFX** service, we went through the **SFX** global database of all open-URL-enabled full text titles and "activated" our full text targets. It was just a matter of clicking on a button for each title; there is also one-click activation for entire packages. It can be time-consuming, but you only have to do it once. We also had to give them a list of miscellaneous journals (mostly free), but that was easy to do from the internal spreadsheets we maintain to generate our Web lists. (These used to be maintained by **Donnie** but are now managed in the Catalog Department.) To make some of the links work, we had to join **CrossRef**. All of these tasks were spread around according to available time and personal inclination — **Donnie** and **Maggie Ressel** (one of our reference librarians who, again, is good at and interested in this sort of thing) did most of the work and solicited and organized help from others, and **Maggie** has been mainly responsible for the day-to-day maintenance.


The bottom line is that we're no more certain than anyone else about what position "ought" to have primary responsibility for these duties; setting up **SFX** involved personnel from all over the organization. We try to use everyone's particular talents and

interests as fully as possible and keep boundaries as porous as we reasonably can.

**RESPONSE:** Submitted by **Ladd Brown** (Head of Acquisitions, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University)

The not-so-short answer is: whoever "owns" the idea usually has to make sure the links are registered properly and check out, or has to find out just how the e-resource is tied to any existing print subscription, or has to find out if there is a license agreement involved and make sure it is forwarded to the proper person. Most often, these duties logically fall to someone who is relatively famil-

iar with the titles and their content and the importance to the curriculum or to the collection. In most shops, this is the responsibility of bibliographers, reference librarians, and the reference staff.

Like a crafty pitcher, electronic resources are coming at us from all different speeds and many different angles. When the workflow is more circular and less linear, traditional library units lose their territorial significance and project management techniques and strategies come into play. (By circular, I do not mean a solar system model, but rather a series of intermeshing gears, sort of like a clock or transmission. Our Link-Out story illustrates this example.) 

## From the Reference Desk

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, College of Charleston)  
<gilson@cofc.edu>

**W**hether it is international terrorism or a convenience store robbery, crime grabs headlines. It is often at the forefront of popular concern while at the same time being a subject of continuous scholarly study. Now there is a new four-volume encyclopedia that clearly demonstrates both these points.

Sage Publications has just released the *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment* (2002, 076192258X, \$600) edited by **David Levinson**. Although the primary emphasis is on the United States, the coverage is international and multidisciplinary, and while it utilizes current research from diverse areas, the *Encyclopedia* is firmly grounded in the field of criminal justice. There are 439 articles gathered around major themes like crimes and related behaviors, law and justice, policing and forensics, as well as those centered on corrections, victimology and punishment. There are also entries covering the social context of crime, crime in individual nations/regions, the impacts of religion on concepts of criminal justice and special populations such as women, street youth and the homeless. Other broad categories include concepts and theories, research strategies and methods, and organizations.

As you would expect from a high quality reference set, there are a number of added features in this encyclopedia. Each volume contains a reader's guide which groups related articles by the major themes mentioned above, as well as an alphabetical list of entries and a chronology. Sidebars and black and white illustrations break up the text and many of the articles contain a convenient summary paragraph. There is also a list of contributors, and an 80-page general index. And there is my one concern. The index while thorough, employs the annoying practice of referring to page numbers without reference

to the specific volume.

At the same time the volumes themselves are not labeled with their page ranges nor is there a key to the volume page ranges in the front of the index.

Despite this minor complaint, the *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment* is an impressive reference. The coverage is comprehensive and the treatment scholarly. The contributors are academics or professionals in the field and the resulting articles are thorough and serious, often with substantial bibliographies. The main audience will be college students and faculty as well as criminal justice professionals. However, larger public libraries will also find it well worth considering for their informed lay readers and serious high school students. Broader in scope than the *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Deviant Behavior* (Brunner-Routledge, 2000, 1560327723, \$520) and far more scholarly and up-to-date than **Jay Robert Nash's** *Encyclopedia of World Crime* (Crime Books, 1990, 0923582002, \$625) this set is destined to be a standard in the field.

Great Britain has played a key role in world politics during the last century. Anyone needing proof need look no further than the *Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century British Politics* (2002, 0198601344, \$60). The names of the people covered in this one volume reference bear witness to this fact. **Churchill**, **Mountbatten**, **Anthony Eden**, **David Lloyd George**, and more recently **Margaret Thatcher** and **Tony Blair** have all played critical roles on the world stage. While general editor **John Ramsden** has assembled a work that points this out, more importantly, he and his contributors

*continued on page 48*

<<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>



cover the less known people as well as the many diverse political institutions, numerous events, and divisive issues that make up the fabric of British political life. In short, the *Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century British Politics* offers a thorough and comprehensive look at almost every facet of British politics in over 3000 brief, but factual, articles. This is a reference book that is well-suited for getting quick facts and clear, lucid definitions and explanations. Students, scholars and general readers will find it a handy and useful compendium of relevant information. The only downside is the lack of an index. Access is provided by the alphabetical arrangement and a classified content list. An index would have made this book near flawless for its purpose. However, the *Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century British Politics* is so rich and diverse in contents, and so reasonably priced, most libraries with interest in British politics will find it a natural purchase.

Routledge's *Companion Encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African Film* (2001, 0415187036, \$135) is a unique resource. In this work, editor **Oliver Leaman** focuses on a neglected body of non-western film in a serious, scholarly fashion. Given the title, some may question the inclusion of Central Asian countries like Azerbaijan and the exclusion of countries like Chad and the Sudan. However, **Leaman** explains his reasoning in his introduction and by and large, his selection is on the mark. Aside from a chapter on Central Asian film there are separate chapters on Egyptian, Iranian, Israeli, Libyan, Turkish, and Palestinian film. There is also a chapter on the cinema of Lebanon, Syria and Iraq as well as one on the films of the Maghreb (Algerian, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania). The length of the chapters reflects the strength of the cinematic tradition of the countries treated. In each case, **Leaman** has drawn on experts in the area to bring together a discussion of the cinema of a specific country with a list of major films and individual filmmakers and actors. Conveniently, this organizational scheme allows the reader to get a full impression of the cinema in each country within a single chapter. Admittedly, this could cause problems for ready reference purposes but luckily there is a general index as well as a title and a name index that provide access to specifics.

The *Companion Encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African Film* does film students a real service. It pulls together information on a diverse but geographically related body of filmmaking and makes it accessible in one well-organized volume. Academic libraries serious about supporting film study programs will want it in their collections.

Although produced by academics, *Mar-*

*tial Arts of the World: an Encyclopedia* (2001, 1576071502, \$175) may appeal more to public libraries. Edited by **Thomas A. Green**, an associate professor at Texas A&M, and published by ABC-CLIO, this two-volume set provides articles of varying lengths on over 100 topics related to the martial arts. The approach is historic and the coverage is international so there are articles ranging from gladiators to gunfighters and from medieval knights to the modern martial system of Aikido. Naturally there are entries on a variety of specific martial arts including taekwondo (Korea), judo (Japan), kung fu (China), savate (France), as well as capoeira (Brazil). There are also essays on the diverse forms of martial arts like swordsmanship and wrestling, as well as individual fighting styles like jeet kune do, founded by **Bruce Lee** in the 1960s. Attempting to put martial arts into broader context there are articles on the social uses of martial arts, the relationship between the martial arts and spiritual development and the involvement of women in the martial arts. The *Encyclopedia* also provides a number of useful overview articles on the martial arts of different countries and regions. Both volumes are illustrated with black and white photos and drawings. In addition, there is an informative chronology as well as a useful general index. However the table of contents listing the articles was oddly incomplete in my review copy. The only article listed under "J" was for "Japan" when there are also articles on "Japanese Martial Arts, Chinese influences," "Jeet Kune Do" and "Judo."

Overall, *Martial Arts of the World: an Encyclopedia*, succeeds as a background source and offers interested readers one of the few encyclopedia treatments of this subject. Although the inclusion of professional wrestling is a stretch, generally, the *Encyclopedia* covers both the popular and less known martial arts as serious topics of study. Each article is factual and supported by a helpful bibliography. Nonetheless, as stated above, this set may be of more use in public library reference collections while academic libraries may want it for circulation.

Historians and political scientists will welcome **Michael J. Dubin's United States Presidential Elections, 1788-1860** (2002, 0786410175, \$75). Published by **McFarland**, this one-volume reference compiles official election results by county and state in easy-to-use chronologically arranged tables.

But it is not as straightforward as it sounds. The way presidents have been elected has varied, especially during the first years of the republic. It was not until 1836 that all but one state chose presidential electors by statewide vote. (Of course, South Carolina was the lone exception.) Prior to that time, depending on the state, presidential electors could be selected by the legislature, or by popular vote by district, or by popular vote

by district plus two selected statewide, or by a number of other variants on that theme. In short, standards were tough to come by. This book does a serviceable job in making this all clear. But more importantly, due to **Mr. Dubin's** painstaking research, this reference assembles data not available before, especially for elections prior to 1832. He has used state archives, historical societies, newspapers and an individual private collection to create this valuable work. While the statistical returns make up the bulk of this book, **Mr. Dubin** includes explanatory notes as well as source citations. In addition there is a section of state maps showing the electoral districts for each relevant year.

Much of *United States Presidential Elections, 1788-1860* consists of original research, for which **Mr. Dubin** deserves a great deal of credit. It should earn a place on the shelf with other standard election compilations like *Presidential ballots, 1836-1892* by **W. Dean Burnham** (Ayers Co., 1976, 0405076789, \$78.95) *Presidential vote, 1896-1932* by **Edgar Robinson** (out of print) and **Mr. Dubin's** own, *United States Congressional Elections, 1788-1997*. (McFarland, 1998, 0786402830, \$235).

**Oryx Press** (now an imprint of **Greenwood**) has recently added to their successful statistical handbook series. Drawing from a variety of sources, the *Statistical Handbook on the World's Children* (2002, 1573563900, \$65) helps give definition to an age group that makes up almost 40% of earth's population. Statistics are provided in broad categories including demographics and vital statistics, education, economics and health and nutrition, as well as disease and hunger. There are also specific sections on family and social issues, AIDS and crime, violence and war. Each section is introduced by summary explanations of the tables contained in that section. The statistics cover topics ranging from population growth rates to illiteracy, number of hospital beds to malnutrition, average family size to AIDS deaths and youth unemployment to refugee children. The tables are taken from a number of different sources including UN publications, the World Bank, the US Census, regional and governmental reports and studies from non-governmental organizations. Each table is cited and often contains the relevant web address.

The *Statistical Handbook on the World's Children* provides the reader with a substantial collection of statistics on an important topic. Author and compiler **Chandrika Kaul** should be pleased with her effort. She presents the researcher and student with a convenient, easy-to-use compendium of diverse statistics that will shed light on a variety of topics related to children's issues. Given the importance of this subject, as well as increasing interest, both public and academic libraries will want to add this volume in their collections of statistical resources. 